

GUIDE TO GROUND BEEF

If you're looking for a quick, inexpensive and delicious meal option, choose ground beef! Versatility is what ground beef is all about; it can be used in countless ways with various cooking methods.

Ground beef is available in several different varieties. Select the type to be purchased according to how it will be cooked. All products labeled as ground beef are 100 percent beef and must contain no more than 30 percent fat.

For recipes using ground beef, check out www.BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com to bring exciting new flavors to your table.

Which type of ground beef should I buy?

Ground beef is available in several leanness levels ranging from 70 percent lean to 96+ percent lean. Choose the leanness level according to how it will be cooked. For some foods, like burgers, any type of ground beef will work. For others, we recommend certain lean-to-fat ratios.

Regular Ground Beef (70-77)

Use this type for burgers and in recipes calling for browning (crumbles) like chili, tacos and spaghetti sauce. When properly cooked, it is moist and juicy.

Ground Chuck (78-84)

This leanness level is ideal for meatloaf, meatballs and Salisbury steak because it holds its shape well during cooking. When properly cooked, it is moist, juicy and has a slightly firm texture.

Ground Round (85-89), Sirloin (90-92) or Lean (93-96+)

The highest leanness levels are ideal for recipes when you can't drain off drippings, like casseroles or stuffed peppers. When properly cooked, they have a firm, dense texture.



Cooking Instructions

Ground beef works in a variety of meals from burgers to tacos. Here are a few tips to prepare delicious favorites using ground beef.

Burgers

Many people think of grilling when it comes to preparing burgers, but there are 2 other ways to create delicious burgers.

- **Broiling.** To broil burgers, place them 3 to 4 inches from heat in an oven set to broil.
- **Skillet.** To cook burgers with a skillet, heat a heavy nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Place patties in skillet (do not crowd).

Whether grilling, broiling or using a skillet, cook burgers uncovered to an internal temperature of 160°F. The most accurate way to determine doneness of burgers is with an instant-read thermometer. The color of cooked ground beef is not a reliable indicator of doneness.

How often should I turn my burgers?

When grilling	occasionally
When broiling or in skillet	only once

Cook times for burgers

Size	Cook Time
½ inch thick x 4 inches (4 oz.)	10-13 min.
¾ inch thick x 4 inches (6 oz.)	12-15 min.



Meatloaf – Oven

Shape beef mixture into a 10 x 4-inch loaf on rack in broiler pan. Bake at 350°F for 1 hour and 10 minutes. Brush meatloaf with barbecue sauce; continue baking 5 to 10 minutes, until instant-read thermometer inserted into center registers 160°F.

Crumbles

Brown 1 to 1-1/2 pounds ground beef in heavy nonstick skillet over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes, breaking into crumbles and stirring occasionally. Remove from the skillet with slotted spoon or pour off drippings.

Cooking Tips

- When mixing and shaping ground beef for burgers, meatloaves or meatballs, handle ground beef lightly. Mix and shape gently to keep burgers juicy and meatloaves from becoming too firm and compact after cooking.
- Don't press burgers during cooking; you want to retain those flavorful juices!
- Cook extra crumbles and freeze for even quicker last-minute meals.

Question:

How long can I store ground beef in the refrigerator or freezer?

Why is the storage time shorter than steaks and roasts?

Answer:

Refrigerate ground beef immediately upon arriving home. Place it in the meat compartment or the coldest part of the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Freeze ground beef wrapped in transparent film for up to 2 weeks. For longer storage, repackage in airtight heavy-duty aluminum foil, freezer paper or plastic freezer bags and freeze for up to 4 months.

Ground beef is more perishable than steaks or roasts. During grinding, any bacteria on the surface of the beef are mixed throughout, resulting in a shorter shelf life.

Question:

Are there other ways to reduce the fat content in ground beef?

Answer:

When cooking burgers, meatballs and meatloaf, simply blot the cooked meat with plain white paper towels; these will absorb some excess fat.

To reduce fat content in ground beef crumbles, drain and rinse. Simply drain cooked ground beef on 3 layers of paper towels, blotting the tops with additional paper towels. Transfer crumbles to a strainer or colander and rinse by pouring 4 cups hot (not boiling) water over them, drain for 5 minutes and proceed as recipe directs.

